

Russians Hit Spy's Book, Authenticity Is Questioned

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Soviet officials have responded with unusual anger to the publication of "The Penkovskiy Papers," a collection of notes and documents purported to have been smuggled to the West by Oleg Penkovsky, a Soviet intelligence officer who was executed in 1962 for spying.

The Russians, as could be expected, charge the papers are a forgery. But many Western experts also subscribe in whole or in part to this view.

In this country, the Russians have reacted most harshly against the reprinting of the book in the Washington Post and other newspapers. So far as is known, no protest has been filed with Doubleday & Co., the publishers of the book which officially comes out on Friday.

On Saturday, the Soviet Foreign Ministry called the Post's Moscow correspondent, and told him, according to the paper, that "the papers are a falsified story, a mixture of anti-Soviet inventions and slander which are put into the mouth of a demasked spy, provocative claims whose purpose is to denigrate the Soviet Union, poison the international atmosphere, and make difficult a search for ways to improve relations between states."

In addition the foreign ministry said if publication of the "papers" continues, "we reserve the right for ourselves to take necessary measures." The Post today printed on schedule the final installment of the series.

Yesterday, the Soviet Embassy here charged the book was "nothing but a crude forgery cooked up two years after Penkovsky's conviction, by those, whom the exposed spy had served."

This was the first official charge that the book had been created by British and American intelligence services, a view subscribed to many Western experts.

The embassy disputed one specific theme that runs throughout the book.

Penkovsky is purported to have written many times that the Soviet high command, from Nikita S. Khrushchev on down, seriously considered a first

strike nuclear attack on the United States—even when Khrushchev was saying the contrary.

The Soviet reply said that "the authors of the 'papers' stuffed them with stereotype anti-Soviet insinuations. Using Penkovsky's name they ascribe to the Soviet Union such concepts as, for instance, the concept of preventive war, which in reality is hatched by certain forces in the West. The authors of the 'papers' apparently assume that any sort of slander might be put into the traitor's mouth and that they could easily get away with that."

Many Western experts doubt that Penkovsky actually sent out the papers which the book's editor, Frank Gibney, describes as "a series of hastily written notes, sketches, and comments, begun early in 1961. . . . The last entry . . . was written on Aug. 25, 1962."

Gibney said in the book's introduction that about the time of Penkovsky's arrest on Oct. 22, 1962, "the papers were smuggled out of the Soviet Union to an Eastern European country. From there they were transmitted to Peter Deriabin, himself a former defector from the State Security Forces, who undertook the long preliminary work of translation and selection. Their authenticity is beyond question."

Those who question its authenticity believe that much of the book was put together from the potpourri of information and gossip that Penkovsky gave to Western intelligence agencies during the 16 months he worked for them.

Penkovsky (the book refers to him as "Penkovskiy," using the more formal transliteration from the Russian) presumably told the Western agents everything that he purportedly wrote down and then would have had to risk sending out of the country.

Fervent Anti-Communist
Additional doubts are thrown on the reliability of some of the views attributed to Penkovsky, who appears as a fanatical anti-Communist who believed the West was letting its guard down in the face of an immense Soviet espionage campaign against it.

Khrushchev, for instance, would sign a separate peace treaty with East Germany as he threatened and that he would not sign a nuclear test ban treaty with the West for 10 years. Actually a partial ban was agreed on in 1963.

Much of the book is devoted to stories about the personal lives of some top Soviet officials, most of whom are or were in the military—the type of knowledge someone as well placed as Penkovsky, a colonel in the military intelligence, would know—but which would be of only marginal importance to Western intelligence.

Little "Hard" Information
The book contains little "hard" intelligence information—the kind that would probably not be released by an intelligence agency. It contains a good deal of speculation and rumor that every agency receives from its agents but has to be discarded.

Gibney said Penkovsky's main achievement was his supplying of up-to-date information about Russian and East German military plans during the Berlin crisis of 1961-62. He also suggests that Penkovsky contributed information on the buildup in Cuba, which only became a crisis the day before his arrest.

Soviet officials believe there is some connection with the publication now of the "Papers" and the international scene.

Seen as Agent of U.S.
One of the reasons they have been especially harsh on The Post is apparently a feeling on Moscow's part that The Post is working in this instance as an agent of the U.S. government—something the Post denied in an editorial yesterday.

The question is raised, however, as to who was responsible for the "papers" falling into Gibney's hands. If intelligence agencies were responsible, as some observers believe, then was the publication approved at the highest levels of government?

Gibney, who supplied the commentaries that preceded each chapter of the "papers," has written several books in the past and is a former magazine editor.

There is some mystery about Deriabin—the former agent of

defected in the 1950s to the West. Nothing more was heard from him until his participation was disclosed in this book.

It is considered likely that Deriabin had some connections with the Western intelligence agencies, at least on a consultative basis.

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